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# COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA



## OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

### Executive Order 29 (2006)

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#### ESTABLISHING THE HEALTH INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY COUNCIL

##### **Importance of the Issue**

Building and improving our health information technology infrastructure is critical to providing quality health care. As the complexity of our health care system continues to grow, health care providers must leverage information technology to improve patient safety and health outcomes. It is critical that Virginia health care providers employ health information technology to provide the best care for patients. Improving health care technology infrastructure offers the potential for both improving the quality and safety of patient care and helping control costs.

In addition, public policies adopted prior to the widespread adoption of information technology in health care at times prevent seamless sharing of health records information among health providers, particularly between hospitals and hospital systems and community physicians. Reexamining these public policies can help speed the widespread adoption of health IT, quickly close the “adoption gap” between large and small physician practices, and, most importantly, improve the lives and healthcare of Virginians and all Americans.

With these important potential benefits in mind, health care information technology is important in both institutional and non-institutional settings. It is important for the Commonwealth to encourage the development of appropriate, interoperable health care information technology to improve the quality of care and help control costs. As was recognized in the 2006 Appropriation Act, at the request of my administration, an appropriate first step is to convene major stakeholders and leading thinkers on this issue.

### **Establishing the Council**

By virtue of the authority vested in me as Governor under Article V of the Constitution of Virginia and under the laws of the Commonwealth, including but not limited to Section 2.2.-134 of the *Code of Virginia*, and subject always to my continuing and ultimate authority and responsibility to act in such matters, I hereby establish the Governor's Health Information Technology Council.

In addition to the responsibilities identified in the 2006 Appropriation Act, the Council shall have the following responsibilities:

1. Establish an interoperability framework drawing from and complying with the standards of the Healthcare Information Technology Standards Panel (HITSP).
2. Build public-private partnerships to increase adoption of electronic medical records for physicians in the Commonwealth and encourage vendors and entrepreneurs to build to the Certification Commission for Healthcare Information Technology standards.
3. Identify areas where health information technology can lower health care costs for the Commonwealth of Virginia as an employer and health insurer.
4. Provide an interim report to the Governor by October 15, 2006 recommending amendments to the state budget that will spur the development, implementation, and ongoing use of Virginia's health information technology infrastructure.
5. Recommend funding and strategies necessary to encourage long-term sustained adoption and interoperability of health information technology in the Commonwealth in a report to the Governor by December 1, 2006.
6. Review and approve proposals to fund public-private pilots designed to increase the adoption of electronic medical records out of funds appropriated for that purpose.
7. Examine other issues as may seem appropriate.

The Council shall consist of 15 members to be appointed by the Governor and to serve at his pleasure, in accordance with the parameters laid out in the 2006 Appropriation Act. Additional members may be appointed at the Governor's discretion.

The Secretaries of Health and Human Resources and Technology will co-chair the Council and will be responsible for convening the Council.

The Council shall meet at the call of the co-chairs to oversee the development of the health information technology infrastructure in the Commonwealth. Members of the Council shall serve without compensation. They may receive reimbursement for expenses incurred in the discharge of their official duties.

Staff support shall be provided through the Office of the Governor, the Secretaries of Technology and Health and Human Resources, and such other agencies as the Governor may designate. It is my intention to create a cross-secretarial team to provide staff support to this effort. It is also my intention to draw whenever possible on private sector expertise. Direct expenses for this effort, exclusive of staff time, are estimated at \$9,000.

This Executive Order shall become effective upon its signing and shall return in full force and effect until July 7, 2007, unless amended or rescinded by further executive order. It is my intention to renew this executive order as provided for in 2.2-134 at the appropriate time.

Given under my hand and under the Seal of the Commonwealth of Virginia this 20th day of July 2006.

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Timothy M. Kaine, Governor

Attest:

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Secretary of the Commonwealth